

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

September 2, 2003

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Smith.

A moment of silent prayer was observed

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Osborne, Pinard, O’Neil, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault, Forest

Absent: Alderman Wihby

Mayor Baines stated I would like to acknowledge in the audience this evening our Chief Assessor who is coming back after a courageous battle with an illness. Welcome back, Steve.

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Norman Morais, 51 Riverfront Drive, Manchester stated:

I am a unit owner at Dockside II on Riverfront Drive in beautiful Manchester. I am also the President of the Association. I understand that another attempt is scheduled to be talked about this evening for a proposed boathouse. This would directly abut our property. All of the folks that I represent, 11 units, have been talked to about this and they really don’t believe that this is suitable place for such a recreation area. We live in a residential area. Directly across the street from this proposed boathouse is The Meetinghouse, which is an assistive living area that houses some 90 people. They were also told and signed a petition to

have you folks deny this. We really don't believe that this area, which is accessible by only one road in and for emergency purposes...we envision a lot of traffic going through that area. There is no parking available other than on the street. It is a 24' wide street. We don't believe that this is a suitable area for this. We believe that this is a noble objective but it really doesn't fit there. We implore you to support us in this opinion.

Jane Frink, 33 Riverfront Drive, Manchester stated:

I am the President of the Dockside I Condo Association on Riverfront Drive. Although I can't imagine the river traffic being suitable, I don't see how it is compatible. I wanted to speak about Riverfront Drive itself, which comes off the busy Amoskeag Bridge. It is very difficult now to get in and get out. There is no way to make another outlet. The traffic is already more than it can sometimes take. It is a curving small street. It is very hard to get on and off. I am surprised no one has run into somebody yet and I can't imagine having it with all this traffic. I heard the proposal for this boathouse and while I wish they had access to it, I wish they could find access someplace. This is certainly not the place for it. It is too small an area. If you are not familiar with it I hope you will drive through it sometime and see it because it is just an impossible spot for such a huge operation. Thank you.

Louise Boucher, 51 Riverfront Drive, Manchester stated:

I am a resident of Dockside II Condominiums and I have been there for 53 years in the same spot, not necessarily the Dockside Condos but I had a house here and I have been in the same spot for 53 years. It is going to be hard to find a place that I like as much as that. This is all residential. There are no businesses on our street except up on the front side. There are no parking spaces and right now we have enough traffic with the traffic going in and out of Meetinghouse and the residents that we don't think it can handle any more. We hope you will see things our way. Thank you.

Izzy Flores, 247 North Street, Manchester stated:

I am here because I support the idea of the Greater Manchester Rowing Club and the acquisition of that property. I have three daughters. One daughter I just sent to UNH today. She participated in crew at Central High School for four seasons. She enjoyed it very much. It was one of the few sports that she could actively do having severe asthma. She was also afforded a lot of opportunities because of her experience in crew with college. I have another daughter, Andrea, who is a sophomore at Central and she would like to row this fall. I have another daughter who is an eight grader at Hillside Middle School and she is interested as well. I am also a board member with the Central High School Crew Club. I act as the resource coordinator trying to raise funds to support the team. That is a very difficult process. The sport is very expensive and the equipment is outrageously expensive. We are having a very difficult time maintaining this team. The team was founded by Kathy Bartels who is sitting behind me and coach John Nugent who acted as coach last year and did a fine job with these students. He also volunteered a lot of his own free time to help these kids with their rowing. He has been very active in trying to develop ideas and maintain the

momentum necessary to keep this team going. I would like to thank the Mayor for his expressed support of this project in the newspaper and I would like to also say that I think it would do the community a good thing to get this done for current students and students yet to come. There are thousands of students out there who couldn't come here tonight and I am sure they would express support for this project and I would like you to consider that. Thank you very much.

John Nugent, 139 North Adams Street, Manchester stated:

I am here representing the Greater Manchester Rowing Club tonight. I would like to thank the Aldermen on the Committee on Lands and Buildings for hearing our request on August 19. I have to confess that I wasn't gratified with the answer but I do thank you for giving us the time. I also want to thank the Mayor for his private expressions of support to me for the Greater Manchester Rowing Club as well as the support in the newspapers. What I am asking for tonight is for you to support us in our request. I have here a petition. The petition asks that the Greater Manchester Rowing Club petition the Mayor and Aldermanic Board to seek access to ownership of a City-owned parcel of waterfront land known as Map 105, Lot 0008A be granted or at least considered. The property is unique. It is the only City parcel that we know of that is suitable for the purpose of rowing. You have to row in the upper river to have enough depth for the boats. This allows public access as well to the Merrimack River to all residents of the City of Manchester and we believe it should not be reserved as a residential lot nor should it be developed or sold for residential development. I am urging the Mayor and the Aldermanic Board to overturn the ruling of the Committee on Lands and Buildings rendered on the 19th denying the Greater Manchester Rowing Club's petition to have this parcel of land declared surplus. I urge the Mayor and Aldermen not to adopt the recommendation of the Committee on Lands and Buildings regarding this request. I further urge the Mayor and Aldermen not to vote on the consent agenda tonight to accept the recommendation of the Committee on Lands and Buildings. I further request that this issue be placed on the agenda again for review. I feel personally that I let the kids down by not giving an adequate presentation at the Lands and Buildings Committee and what I am asking is simply for an opportunity to come back with a traffic study and an engineering study to see if this land is suitable. I have 230 signatures of registered voters in the City that I would like to enter into the record all supporting this issue and our stand. Thank you.

Katherine Bartels, 58 Greenfield Street, Manchester stated:

First of all I want to thank all of you for taking the time to call me, those of you who spoke with me today. I greatly appreciate it. I am just coming before you here today to thank you all for hearing our program and for seeing the merit in it. I would like you all and urge you all to please consider tabling the vote at this point in time and I would like to take the opportunity to speak to all of the condo owners. We did not have a chance to do that and we didn't do that well in the fact that we didn't prepare our presentation so I would like the opportunity to speak to those people and also gather support from riverfront owners and allay their fears. I know that they would want us on the river because our presence would be

grateful as well as environmentally friendly. I would like to urge you to please not consider that property as residential and adopt that as residential. I also have a concern. It was mentioned about an emergency access for the Fire Department and for the Marine Patrol as well and I wonder if that were voted in as residential what would happen to the Fire Department's access as well as the Marine Patrol. I know that there is no access above the dam that is public. So there is a question regarding space on that lot. We did have an architect look at that lot preliminary and actually it can be addressed in a very graceful, elegant way that would be suitable for the City and possibly bring back some type of a historical structure that once sat on that river and promoted the health and well-being of the citizens of Manchester in a wonderful cooperative way. Thank you very much.

Maxine Nash, 36 Plummer Street, #1, Manchester stated:

I am a good friend of John and Maureen Nugent and I come from a very large family back in Maine and I think it is great that they are backing or trying to get this rowing club in Manchester. I am a new resident here and have only been here five or six years but if this was to go I would definitely back it and volunteer my services if there was anything I could do.

Judy Gosselin, PO Box 4871, Manchester stated:

I think we need to seriously reconsider the vote that has taken place. I live in Ward 1 and there is a large neighborhood of young teens and this is something that they have come to me knocking on the door asking me to support. It has been the kids who have brought this to my attention. I think it is an opportunity where we need to look at what we can do for the kids of the City. There are a number of different programs and projects going on for developers in the City that are going to take a lot of other focus and a lot of other funding that I think with the folks coming forward tonight with the kids who want to be involved with this I think it behooves us to look at this as how we can look at it from an economical and collaborative manner and bring something of this diversity to the City of Manchester. With the vote I think we owe it to ourselves and the kids to show that as we come to the decision that we look at how to do a comprehensive study and put the facts on the table and show the kids that this is how we are going to work for the betterment of Manchester. In doing that we are showing them how they can get involved, what they need to do as they want to work and bring issues to the table and if they want to create social environments what they can do to help be part of this. I urge you to look at a comprehensive study. I honestly believe there are alternatives to put the right building in there and position it to take into consideration the EPA issues. There are alternatives and we owe it to the kids to look at it in a professional and comprehensive manner. I appreciate your time.

Ted Krol, 135 Becker Street, Manchester stated:

I just want to speak in favor of the petition to look at this boathouse thing further down the road and take a closer look at it. I guess when I first learned of this the thing that concerned me is if this is indeed the last parcel of land on the Merrimack north of the river and we give

this or sell this to a private residential than we are really telling the citizens of Manchester, the City of which was founded on this river, that they are really not welcome to use the river north of the dam. You can own the land on it but you can't have access to it unless you go to Hooksett, which is really stupid. Please all I asking now is that you table it to look at it further down the road and let the Greater Manchester Rowing Club and other supporters come to you again.

Michelle Blandina, 60 Duncan Farms Road, Manchester stated:

I am a student attending Trinity High School and I would like to try rowing. It would be great to be able to use my own City resources to do so. The Greater Manchester Rowing Club would be my only way to take part in such an activity. I know that I, myself, and my fellow students would appreciate you considering this this evening and not voting it down tonight. Thank you for your time.

Inge Grant, 33 Riverfront Drive #1, Manchester stated:

I have lived at 33 Riverfront Drive since it was built. At the beginning of our residence there we had various occasions to witness rowing club festivities on the river. The rowers were given access on the lot that is now under consideration to have condos built right next to the bridge and also a little bit further down. The traffic situation between boats and trailers and cars and people was at that time when there was hardly anybody there, a nightmare. So if this is going to be a rowing club with a clubhouse and regular outings of the young people to do their rowing activities I would imagine that it needs a lot of improvement on the traffic situation and I would like you to really think hard about whether this is possible and safe as well.

Peter Duffy, 246 Lincoln Street, Manchester stated:

I have had three daughters pass through Central High School. What they are doing right now at Central and throughout this region with this rowing club is a fabulous opportunity for the children of our City but it is not just for the children. There are many, many adults who engage in the activity of rowing who actually schlep north to Pembroke to get access to their boat and go on the river. The future of the City very much will depend on how we utilize this wonderful beautiful river resource that we have. Making the river available to as many people as possible is a positive to the City. There is some give and take in every action. I can understand and empathize with the people who live in the condominiums adjacent to this lot but if the adequate studies are allowed to take place and it is architecturally feasible and feasible to the traffic pattern it is going to benefit a lot of people. I urge you to please table this decision and let these studies take place. Maybe it is very, very possible. Once it is lost, it is lost. The river should benefit as many folks as possible.

Steve Tellier, 351 Stark Lane, Manchester stated:

It is not often that I speak as a private resident. We had over 100 people here in a hurriedly informal gathering at the Lands and Buildings Committee meeting on August 19. Over 100

taxpayers who were opposed to this use. This is not the first time this has come up. The Amoskeag Rowing Club found that it wasn't compatible and they moved further north. What people fail to realize is this river is over eight miles long between these two dams and it continues northward in a very deep capacity. By the way, I am personally not insensitive to the needs of the kids. As Mayor Baines will attest, I was a former Booster Club Chairman at West High School for several years so I know the difficulties encompassed here. First of all, it is not compatible in that particular area. The street, the parking has been discussed at nauseum. We are asking that you support what is on the agenda that it is not compatible in use and that the land remain not surplus to the City needs. It is a very difficult site. There are other sites on the Merrimack. I know because I go up and down the river everyday. Thank you for your support and I look forward to that vote.

Keith Hirschmann, 296 Dunbarton Road, Manchester stated:

I am here to support Item R on the consent agenda recommending that the Manchester Rowing Club not be granted the City land on Riverfront Drive. The Committee on Lands and Buildings voted unanimously after seeing 100 residents show up for a committee meeting on short notice just like Steve Tellier said. When I was Alderman for that neighborhood they were under intense pressure. One move was to put a short stay hotel on the short peninsula there and with the residents in the neighborhood we battled that so there is no short stay hotel. Next came in the Meetinghouse riverfront community for the seniors and that is a fine fit. We actually adjusted the City's zoning map in the year 2001 so that it is a residential peninsula. All residential uses are accepted in that area. The only problem is when the meetinghouse was built Chief Kane actually needed a fire lane because it is a three to four story structure so one fire lane took up a lot of width so there really isn't any extra parking in the riverfront area. I am asking you to just support the Committee's action, the unanimous decision of the Lands and Buildings Committee. I would respect everyone for their vote for the residents of Ward 12 being on Farmer Lane, Stark Lane and Riverfront Drive. All of those people bought their homes. They use the river. They all have boats. They all have residential uses there. The steep embankment that the City owns is a 20' steep grade full of poison ivy and I don't envision a 70' boathouse being built in front of the condominiums. I would ask that you support their wishes. On another note I would ask that you all really think hard of Jim Clancy, a great Alderman, and vote for a plaque in his name at Bruno Square.

Bob Shaw, 172 Arah Street, Manchester stated:

I want to change the agenda for a second. It seems like I am always talking about taxes. I have passed out to each of the people here a chart showing what the taxes were for the property that is presently owned, to the best of my knowledge, by the people on this Board but might not have been owned in the year 2000. You weren't on the Board in the year 2000, a lot of you, but the property was there and I thought it was interesting to note that the City's values went up about 35%. I sorted this chart based on the percentages. It is not easy for you to figure out which Alderman is which because that was not my intent but there are

only 12 because I couldn't find properties for two of them. My point is that the property that you owned or had owned or somebody owned at that particular address went up in taxes by \$1,000 or \$1,074. That is 12 people in the City of Manchester. One person, myself, my taxes went up \$1,235. It concerns me a great deal because the votes that are taken on this Board relate to spending in the City of Manchester. I wondered why is it that my taxes go up so much and I am paying a disproportionate share when I compare my taxes to 12 other people. Well you all don't live in Ward 1 that is for sure and you all don't have an acre of land maybe but this is ridiculous. I wanted to point this out to you that even though you don't have control supposedly of the Assessors and how the job is done I think it is important to realize that we want oversight of this particular task in the future. I thank you very much, Mayor, and appreciate the opportunity to speak.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Sysyn, duly seconded by Alderman Forest, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk